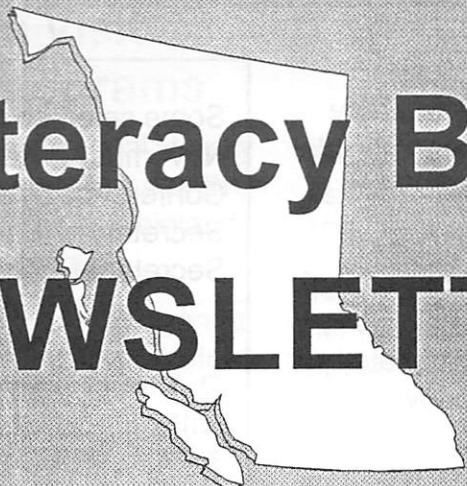




Literacy B.C. NEWSLETTER

December 1997

Volume 3, Number 4

Second IALS Survey Released at International Literacy Policy Conference

Raising the level of a nation's literacy competence demands more than just policies focused on literacy as a single issue. It is also important that the goal of increased literacy skill be supported across a broad range of other policy areas such as youth, seniors, employment, human resource development, health, social welfare and crime prevention.

The above is from **Literacy Skills for the Knowledge Society**, the latest report from the International Adult Literacy Survey (IALS), released in Canada on November 7, 1997.

This new report builds on the data presented in the first IALS publication, **Literacy Economy and Society**, released in December 1995. IALS was the first ever international, comparative report on literacy performance. Seven countries took part -- Germany, the Netherlands, Poland, Sweden, Switzerland, the United States and Canada.

The new report continues the IALS story with data collected from five more countries -- Australia, Belgium (Flanders), Ireland, New Zealand and the United Kingdom.

Literacy Skills for the Knowledge Society tells us more about the impact of low literacy on individuals and economies, and about the benefits of high literacy levels to societies.

The report is jointly published by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD); Statistics Canada; and the National Literacy Secretariat (NLS), Human Resources Development Canada (HRDC).

The report was released in Canada at last month's OECD international conference in Vancouver. The aim of the conference, called Policy Strategies for Improving Literacy Skills, was to explore the policy implications of the survey and share information on national

continued on page 2

responses. Participants included literacy specialists and senior government officials from 20 countries.

In a joint press release, the OECD and HRDC said that, in Canada, 42 per cent of adults aged 16 to 65 years are below the level of literacy considered appropriate in order to function effectively in today's society.

The key finding of the new survey is that there are significant literacy skill gaps in every country surveyed. The myth that low skills are a problem only for developing countries is exposed in every country where data were collected.

- ☐ At least 25 per cent of adults in all the countries surveyed fail to reach level 3 of the five literacy skill levels. Level 3 is considered the minimum desired level in many countries.
- ☐ From 15 to over 50 per cent of the adult population in the countries surveyed face tremendous difficulties in coping with the literacy and numeracy demands placed on them in today's complex and changing economy and society.
- ☐ Of Canadians at Level 1, 26% were unemployed; at level 2, 10% were unemployed. At levels 4/5, only 4% of Canadians were unemployed.

Copies of **Literacy Skills for the Knowledge Society** will be available in early 1998. An information kit is available now, containing background information and highlights of the survey. Call Literacy B.C. for a copy.

Some selected passages from the November 7 media release at the OECD Conference by Jim Page, Executive Secretary of the National Literacy Secretariat.

☐ **Almost every Canadian is -- or soon will be -- affected by our transition to a knowledge-based society...The growth in high skill jobs means higher levels of literacy are needed now. And that means that exceptional demands will be made upon the literacy skills of Canadians.**

☐ **IALS makes strong links between industrial growth and skill.....It tells us that what we spend on literacy is not a cost -- it is an investment -- a long term, interest-bearing bond which pays both social and economic dividends.**

☐ **The key to solving Canada's literacy challenge lies in the widespread adoption of a learning culture, a commitment to life-long learning. We need to create literacy- and learning-rich environments in our homes, in the community and in our workplaces.**

OECD Delegates Visit Local Literacy Programs

Delegates attending an international literacy policy conference in Vancouver last month made site visits to several Lower Mainland literacy and workplace programs.

The site visits were included on the agenda of the OECD Conference held at the Hotel Vancouver November 4-7, 1997.

Approximately 50 delegates were divided into three groups to visit these selected sites:

- ☐ B.C. Workforce Literacy Program Exchange
- ☐ Speech Assisted Reading and Writing (SARAW) Program, Capilano College
- ☐ City of Vancouver Workplace Language Program
- ☐ Vancouver Community College (VCC), City Centre Campus vocational/technical program
- ☐ VCC King Edward Campus computer literacy lab and LINC (Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada) Program
- ☐ The Native Education Centre
- ☐ MacMillan Bloedel New Westminster Division-- Skill Enhancement Training (SET) Program.

The site visits were followed by a banquet in New Westminster hosted by the United Food and Commercial Workers' (UFCW) Union Local 2000 Training Centre and the graduates of the UFCW Cook Literacy Program. The evening's keynote address was given by Ken Georgetti, President, B.C. Federation of Labour.

Let's Welcome Jean Rasmussen

Jean Rasmussen has joined Literacy B.C. as **Projects Manager** effective October 1, 1997.

Jean brings over 20 years experience to her new position. She has worked as an advocate, practitioner, trainer and community-based program developer within the literacy field. Jean recently moved to Vancouver from Toronto, where she was employed as a program coordinator/ABE instructor with the Toronto Board of Education. Jean has a M.Ed in Adult Education -- Focus: Critical Global and Community Issues, Literacy and Special Needs.

Jean's job at Literacy B.C. is to coordinate and implement the Regional Coordination project and the 1998 Summer Literacy Institute for literacy practitioners, and to provide consultation, support and training to the field.

Jean is particularly interested in promoting and developing family and workplace literacy, with a focus on access to programs, and designing training workshops for instructors and volunteers.

We welcome Jean on board at Literacy B.C.! You can reach her at:

Phone: 684-0624 or 1-800-663-1293

Fax: (604) 684-8520

E-mail: jrasmussen@hubcap.mlnet.com

**Season's Greetings to all
our readers from the staff
of Literacy B.C.**

News1998-99 cost-shared grant application kits ready

Application packages for the 1998/99 adult literacy cost-shared grants are now available.

Grants for adult literacy initiatives have been funded by the NLS and the B.C. Ministry of Education, Skills and Training (MoEST) since 1987. The fund for B.C. is currently \$1,600,000.

The purpose of the fund is to encourage and improve partnerships between community groups, school districts and colleges, and to promote the active involvement of all sectors of society in adult literacy education.

Groups eligible for funding include institutions such as community colleges, school districts, First Nations bands, non-profit literacy organizations, registered societies with a literacy interest, unions and business.

Projects the program has supported in the past include public awareness, learning materials, professional development, aboriginal initiatives, tutoring programs, and learner events.

This year, the program is particularly interested in receiving applications which further family literacy, workforce literacy and research in literacy practice.

The kit includes an application form, the Call for Proposals Guidelines and a booklet describing the approved projects for 1997/98.

Applicants with concerns or questions should contact Linda Cooney. As the Community Liaison for the Adult Literacy Cost-Shared Program, Linda's role is to help people develop their project proposals.

Contact Linda at:

Phone: (250) 381-7080

Fax: (250) 381-7099

e-mail: lcooney@islandnet.com

**You can get your application forms
and guidelines from:**

Literacy B.C.

Phone: 684-0624

or 1-800-663-1293

and

MoEST

Phone: (250) 356-0103

or (250) 387-6174

Fax: (250) 952-6110

or download them from the web at:

<http://www.est.gov.bc.ca/ahp/projects>

A Long Walk for Literacy

A learner from B.C. will walk from St. John's to Parksville to celebrate and raise funds for literacy next year.

Carol Bossio will begin to walk across Canada from Newfoundland on April 1, 1998. She plans to arrive in her home town on Vancouver Island by the end of 1998.

The goal of the walk is to raise funds for literacy in Canada in two ways:

- ☐ through a National Adult Literacy Learner Bursary Fund to be administered by the Movement for Canadian Literacy (MCL).
- ☐ by encouraging literacy groups along the walk route to hold walks with Carol to raise funds for their local organizations.

Start-up funds for the project are being provided by the the National Literacy Secretariat. The project is administered by Literacy B.C., under the direction of Mary Thompson Boyd, Coordinator.

Carol, who learned to read as a student at The Write Place in Parksville, organized the first Walk for Literacy in that community in 1994. The idea for a national Walk sprang from Carol's dream of spreading the "Walk" message across the country.

The walk is the first national literacy event of its kind ever undertaken in Canada.

A Walk web site will be available on the Internet through the National Adult Literacy Database (NALD) early in the new year. The site will provide updates on Carol's progress over the course of the project. It will also provide information on how communities can get involved, and the opportunities available for volunteer support or making "in-kind" donations to the Walk.

You can access the NALD website at:

<http://www.nald.ca>

Currently, Carol is in training for the event. She is working with a fitness instructor, skating, walking, lifting weights and doing other exercises.

For more information on the Walk, and how you can participate, contact:

Mary Thompson Boyd

Phone: (604) 685-4437

Fax: (604) 685-4467

Thank you to our Donors...

Thank you to the following individuals and organizations who have donated \$100 or more to Literacy B.C. in the past few months

AGF Management
B.C. Tel Employees' Community Fund
Elliott & Page Mutual Funds
Micro Computers and Graphics
Panagopoulos Pizza Franchises
Reva Potashin

Harry Richards
Deanna Sordi
Southland Canada Inc.
United Way of the Lower Mainland
Wood Gundy

...and to those who have contributed up to \$100

James Acford
Carol de Balinhard
Theresa Barthos
Noreen Cottle
Evelyn Dixon
Bob and Leona Gadsby
K.T. Gillies
Helen Gray
Mary Lynn Halley
Helen Heselgrave

Eileen Moore
Rita Morin
Basha Rahn
May Ramsay
Raymond Raj
Frank Rotering
Jan Seedhouse
Mary Selman
Mr. and Mrs. R. White
Dr. M. Zlotnik

We would like to express special appreciation to 7-Eleven Canada. 7-Eleven promoted literacy and Literacy B.C. across the province with a special campaign asking customers to donate change at counter coin boxes. More than \$5,000 was raised through this promotion.



SOUTHLAND CANADA INC.

"By supporting Literacy B.C. it is our privilege rather than our obligation to extend a hand to our neighbours through our contributions and volunteer activities in order to build a better future together. 7-Eleven Canada is proud to be a contributor to this worthwhile effort."

This generous donation has helped us to reach the many adults in B.C. who need and want to improve their literacy skills.

THANK-YOU 7-ELEVEN!



News from Literacy B.C.

Literacy B.C. elected a new Board of Directors for 1997-98 at the Literacy B.C. annual general meeting on November 7, 1997 in Vancouver.

The guest speaker at the meeting was Dr. Albert Tuijnman, Principal Administrator, Education and Training Division, of the OECD. Dr. Tuijnman's topic was, **Second Wave, the New International Literacy Survey: Literacy Skills for the Knowledge Society.**

Our 1996-97 Annual Report is included with this newsletter and highlights the many successful activities and projects completed over the past year.

In addition to our ongoing key areas of work in providing information, referral and support services, plans for 1997-98 include:

- ☐ support, training and consultation for 10 regional literacy coordinators
- ☐ development of an automated literacy resource centre (library)
- ☐ maintaining and expanding the provincial electronic literacy network
- ☐ a Summer Literacy Institute in July 1998
- ☐ support and development of family literacy programs in B.C.
- ☐ support and development of workforce literacy initiatives.

Meet the Literacy B.C. Board of Directors 1997-98

Officers

President: Dr. Paul Gallagher (Vancouver)
Vice-President: Corey Blades (Northern Lights)
Treasurer: Melanie Austin (Camosun)
Secretary: Sandi Lavallie (Northwest)
Learner Representative: Ingrid Braathen (North Island)
Past President: Alan Dolman (Okanagan)

Directors

Carol Bossio (Malaspina)
Marnie Crowe (East Kootenay)
Brenda Lee Giles (Vancouver)
Trish Harrison (Selkirk)
Gloria Olafson (New Caledonia)
Jan Seedhouse (Cariboo)
Kelly Sinclair (Douglas)

We'll miss you!

Four board members retired this year. We want to thank **Debbie DeMare, Bob Evans, Janet Harris and Carol Johnson** for their dedication and commitment to the work of Literacy B.C.

News from the literacy field

New Workplace Literacy Award

The Conference Board of Canada has established a new award for workplace literacy programs.

The Awards for Excellence in Workplace Literacy are intended to recognize innovative and effective programs in the workplace and raise awareness of the value of these programs to business, employees and the community.

The awards are sponsored by the NLS.

Guidelines for the awards state that a program fits the criteria if it "enhances employee skills in document, prose and/or quantitative literacy measures. Programs such as mentoring, in-house training, core competency evaluations and partnerships are examples of programs that may promote literacy skills."

There are three award categories for businesses: fewer than 100 employees, between 100 - 500 employees, and more than 500 employees.

To qualify, entrants must be a for-profit business currently operating in Canada that has established a literacy program (still ongoing) prior to January 1, 1996.

Judges will look for programs "with proven and sustained business involvement that has made a significant difference in the successful achievement of the goals of the program."

Award winners will be recognized at the Conference Board of Canada's annual meeting, "Business, Education and the Community," in Ottawa May 10 -12, 1998.

The deadline for applications is January 29, 1998. To obtain an information brochure, contact:

Linda Scott
The Conference Board of Canada
255 Smyth Road
Ottawa, Ontario K1H 8M7
Phone toll-free: 1-888-801-8818
Fax: (613) 526-4857
e-mail: scott@conferenceboard.ca
website: <http://www.conferenceboard.ca/nbec>

Project to Examine Distance Education

A western Canada study is underway to determine how adult literacy programs are being delivered by distance education technology throughout the four western provinces and two territories.

The Western Region Adult Literacy and Distance Education Project is a ten-month study (September 1997 to June 1998) funded by the NLS and delivered through the Saskatchewan Literacy Network.

The goal is to determine what distance education programs exist for adult literacy learners. The project will also explore what strategies are already in place using distance education for adult literacy and determine if a cross-border or regional strategy would be more efficient.

continued on page 9

News from the literacy field

"Distance Education" from page 8

"Distance education" refers to delivery by technology such as radio, telephone, television, computer or any audio or visual means including, for example, correspondence courses and tapes.

To collect information, a practitioner questionnaire is being distributed. The questionnaire defines distance education as "any learning initiative where there is physical separation in time and/or space between the educator and the learner." As well as geographical distance, as in rural areas, distance refers to urban isolation, such as that experienced by a single parent or elderly person without the means to access an educational group or centre.

NALD will post the questionnaire on-line beginning January 10, 1998. The NALD website is at <http://www.nald.ca>.

If you are interested in taking part or have written or other material that may be useful to the project, contact:

Dilys Collier
P.O. Box 1211
Athabaska, Alberta
T9S 2B1
Phone/Fax: (403) 675-5993
e-mail: dilys@telusplanet.net

Revenue Canada Offers Free Income Tax Assistance

Calling all learners and tutors – free help is available when you prepare your 1997 income tax return next year.

The Community Volunteer Income Tax Program, sponsored by Revenue Canada, provides volunteers to assist people in the community, including newcomers to Canada, low-income wage learners, students and seniors, to prepare their tax returns.

The service provides assistance for people with straightforward tax situations to help them understand their tax obligations and receive the credits to which they are entitled.

Learners are encouraged to use the program. Literacy organizations and tutors are invited to take training offered by Revenue Canada, starting in February 1998.

Revenue Canada will provide a one day, free training session at various locations around the province. For groups of 15 or more volunteer tutors, Revenue Canada will send a trainer to the community.

To find out how you can participate call:

Vancouver (604) 691-4526
Burnaby/Fraser (604) 666-9282
Vancouver Island (250) 363-8417
Southern Interior (250) 462-9200 local 268
Northern B.C. and Yukon (250) 561-7816
Toll free anywhere in B.C. 1-800-959-8281

Upcoming Events....

Two Summer Literacy Institutes

Literacy B.C. is planning its **Summer Literacy Institute 1998**, July 12-25.

The proposed courses are Family Literacy, Volunteer Tutor Training and Program Management, and Literacy Development, with a series of practical workshops. Details will be announced in our newsletter as soon as they are available.

If you have any questions about the 1998 Summer Literacy Institute, contact Jean Rasmussen, Projects Manager, at Literacy B.C.

Phone 684-0624 or 1-800-663-1293.

The Centre for Literacy's Summer Institute, **Literacy and Technology: Maintaining a Human Face**, takes place June 25-27 in Montreal.

The Institute will focus on:

- ☐ how do new technologies change the role of teachers, tutors and students?
- ☐ what kinds of training/support are required by teachers, trainers, tutors and parents in the school, workplace, community and home?

The institute is open to practitioners and others from Canada, the U.S. and abroad.

For more information, contact:

The Centre for Literacy
3040 Sherbrooke Street West
Montreal, Quebec H3Z 1A4
Phone: (514) 931-8731 Ext. 1415
Fax: (514) 931-5181
e-mail: literacycntr@dawsoncollege.qc.ca
website: <http://www/nald.ca/litcent.htm>

Reading Association President to Lecture Here

"Early Intervention: What Works", a public lecture aimed at literacy workers, educators and parents of young children, is scheduled for January 20, 1998.

The event is sponsored by the B.C. Literacy Council of the International Reading Association (BCLCIRA). The guest speaker is International Reading Association President Dr. Jack Pikulski, Professor of Education, University of Delaware. Dr. Pikulski is an experienced researcher of intervention strategies and "a passionate advocate for the best reading practice for children."

In addition to the featured speaker, a panel of local educators will answer questions from the audience.

The lecture will take place on January 20, 1998 from 7-9 p.m. at the Vancouver Public Library (Central Branch). The cost is \$15 (\$10 for students and IRA/BCLCIRA members).

For further information and to reserve space, contact:

Honey Halpern
Phone: (604) 228-1350
Fax: (604) 668-6405



NEW RESOURCES...from B.C. literacy cost-shared projects

The Small Group Bridging Classroom Pilot Project

Sponsored by Project Literacy Kelowna, Okanagan University College, and the Kelowna Public Library

This five-page booklet is a short summary of the achievements of Project Literacy Kelowna in developing the concept of easing learners from one-to-one tutoring into classroom study. It describes how six learners met twice weekly over eight months with an ABE instructor to upgrade their literacy skills in a combination of individual study and group work. The factors involved in the project, such as participant mix, students' goals, and flexible delivery method, can be adapted by other literacy organizations.

Reader's Helper

Sponsored by the College of New Caledonia and the Prince George Public Library.

This is a collection of tutorials that were developed and distributed singly during the past year. The tutorials are designed to help fundamental level learners study literature. Each tutorial focuses on a different aspect of literature – such as narration, plot, character, setting, subject and theme, style and tone. Learning activities are suggested for each topic.

Ideas, Activities and Exercises

Sponsored by Vancouver Community College

Another teaching tool is this hands-on workbook for fundamental level English. The workbook is the product of materials developed over the last 20 years by the Basic Education Department of Vancouver Community College. It is an updated and revised version of the original *Guideline Curriculum for ABE*, published in 1978. The material represents, "an eclectic approach that combines the best of whole language, language experience and process writing with some analytic phonics and spelling instruction." Material is organized by topic, so that students may move back and forth between levels as required.

Hand in Hand - helping your child grow. Perinatal Literature in Plain Language

Sponsored by the College of New Caledonia and the Quesnel Perinatal Advisory Committee

This is a collection of handouts for low literacy and English as a Second Language families. It was developed as a response to the need for literature on pregnancy and baby care for new Canadians, teen parents and those with literacy skills at the fundamental level. Sections are printed on coloured paper in an easy-to-read format.

All of the resources from cost-shared products reviewed here are available from Literacy B.C.

DOING IT FOR OURSELVES



Doing it for Ourselves: A Collection of Resource Tools for Volunteer Tutor Program Coordination

Sponsored by Douglas College and Literacy B.C.

This manual was developed in response to requests from the B.C. literacy field for assistance in coordinating volunteer tutor programs and training new volunteer tutors. Its purpose is to assist those new to the field to design their own programs.

It explores such topics as:

- ☐ different approaches to adult learning

- ☐ key teaching and learning communication strategies

- ☐ the VALT (Volunteer Adult Literacy Tutoring) whole language approach

The manual is "not a set of instructions" on how to assemble a volunteer tutor program or create a curriculum. Instead, those who contributed are "passing along tools" that can be used to meet the specific needs of each community, coordinator, tutor and student.

Stepping Out: Regional Literacy Coordination Project 1994-1997

Sponsored by Vancouver Community College and Literacy B.C.

For the past three years, Literacy B.C. has developed and managed the Regional Literacy Coordination Project. The project was started in 1994 to build regional networks and community partnerships, and develop the skills of literacy practitioners.

Three regions were involved the first year -- Northern Lights, East Kootenay and Selkirk, and this report includes three other regions -- Okanagan, New Caledonia and Malaspina/North Island.

This report takes the reader year by year through the project, outlining the accomplishments in each region. First-hand accounts of their experiences from each coordinator are included, such as this one from East Kootenay regional coordinator, Leona Gadsby: *"It has been immeasurably important to have contact with people who have a long history in the literacy field, who have diverse and unique experiences and ideas and who are working towards a common goal. The support that comes from sharing our successes, failures, frustrations, fears, ideas and hopes cannot be overstated."*

More new resources...

The Adult Basic Education Student Outcomes Project, 1993-96, Study Reports A, B and C.

Stepping Stones to the Future. A brochure highlighting key findings and trends of Studies A, B and C (June 1997)

This is a research report that answers the, "who, what and why?" of adult basic education (ABE) in B.C.

The Student Outcomes Project surveyed a total of 5,225 ABE students over three phases, between 1993 and 1996.

The purpose of the study was to collect clear and reliable information on the educational, social and economic outcomes for students enrolled in college ABE programs.

The study was managed by a steering committee which represented colleges and institutes, the Ministry of Education, Skills and Training (MoEST) and the Advanced Education Council of B.C.

The results provide the most comprehensive data available in North America to date on such questions as why students enroll in ABE, what barriers hamper their success and how ABE can better meet students' needs.

The study found that:

- ☐ About three quarters of ABE students have specific long-term goals, such as to qualify for another program (80%) or to improve employment opportunities (71%)
- ☐ More than 85% of students complete some or all of their courses

- ☐ 60 per cent of students progress to further ABE, career/technical or university courses
- ☐ More than 80% of students report improved employability skills such as self-confidence, study skills, and learning habits.

Copies of the full report and the brochure are available from:

The Advanced Education Council of B.C.
Suite 950 - 409 Granville Street
Vancouver, B.C. V6C 1T2
Phone: (604) 895-5080
Fax: (604) 895-5088

An upgraded version of STAPLE 96 (Supplemental Training for Alberta Practitioners in Literacy Education) will be released in January 1998.

STAPLE is a multimedia training program for adult literacy educators in CD-ROM and handbook format. It was developed to help educators examine how a student reads and writes and to design an appropriate program based on the student's strengths and weaknesses.

STAPLE Volume 2 contains a number of technical changes designed to make the program more user-friendly.

For more information on the upgraded version of STAPLE and to order, contact:

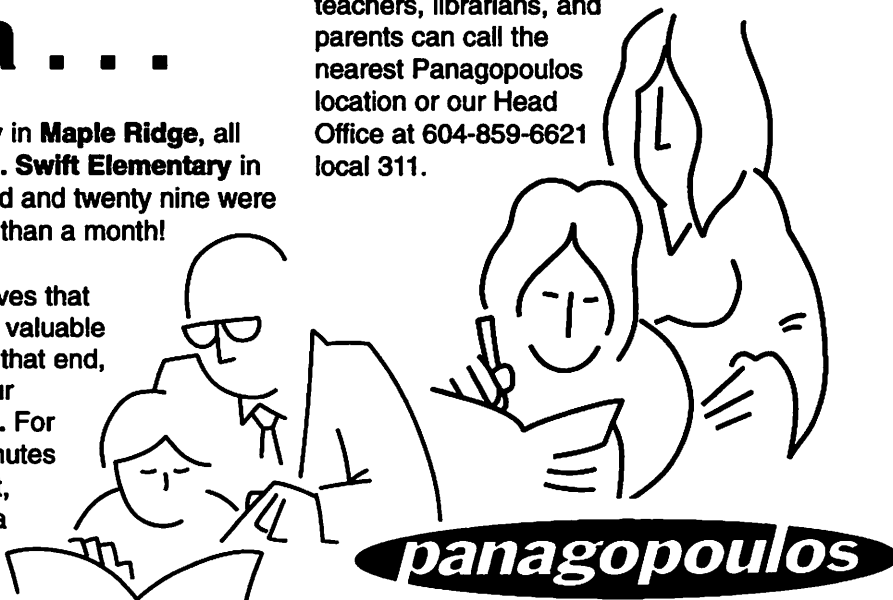
Flo Brokop
STAPLE Project Coordinator
Literacy Services of Canada Ltd.
P.O. Box 52192
Edmonton, Alberta
T6G 2T5
Phone: (403) 492-2984
e-mail: brokop@telusplanet.net

Great Books and Great Pizza . . .

At **Hammond Elementary** in **Maple Ridge**, all the kids love them. At **T.A. Swift Elementary** in **Abbotsford**, three hundred and twenty nine were each awarded one in less than a month!

Panagopoulos Pizza believes that reading is one of the most valuable skills a child can learn. To that end, we support literacy with our **Reading Award Program**. For every 20 books or 350 minutes a child reads with a parent, Panagopoulos will award a free pizza. Teachers and parents agree, receiving a Panagopoulos pizza provides great incentive for children to read.

This program is available during the school year at participating Panagopoulos locations throughout Western Canada. To find out how individual classes or entire schools can take part, teachers, librarians, and parents can call the nearest Panagopoulos location or our Head Office at 604-859-6621 local 311.



Who We Are

Our mission is to support literacy learners, to develop community partnerships, and to present a united voice on literacy. We are supported by the B.C. Ministry of Education, Skills, and Training; Human Resources Development Canada, National Literacy Secretariat; memberships; and donations.

Here's how you can reach us:

Literacy B.C.
622 - 510 West Hastings Street
Vancouver, B.C. V6B 1L8
Phone: 1-800-663-1293 toll free in B.C.
(604) 684-0624 in the Lower Mainland
Fax: (604) 684-8520 Email: literacy_bc@douglas.bc.ca
WWW: <http://www.nald.ca/lbc.htm>

Donations to Literacy B.C. are tax deductible.